

VZCZCXRO5347
RR RUEHAST
DE RUEHTA #0168 0191004
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 191004Z JAN 07 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8214
RUEHAST/USOFFICE ALMATY

UNCLAS ASTANA 000168

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN GETS NEW ELECTION BOSS

¶1. Summary: On January 17, the Mazhilis (lower house of parliament) selected Kuandyk Turgankulov as the new chairman of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC), Vladimir Foos as the new deputy chairman, and Bakhyt Meldeshov as the new secretary. All of the appointees currently serve on the CEC, and their promotions do not appear to carry any significant political implications. The outgoing chairman of the CEC, Onalsyn Zhumabekov, was appointed deputy head of the presidential administration by President Nazarbayev, also on January 17. End summary.

¶2. In response to a proposal by President Nazarbayev, the Mazhilis on January 17 selected Kuandyk Turgankulov as the new chairman of the CEC, Vladimir Foos as the new deputy chairman, and Bakhyt Meldeshov as the new secretary. Pursuant to the Kazakhstani Constitution, the Mazhilis dismisses and selects the chairman and other members of the CEC based on the president's recommendation.

¶3. Turgankulov was promoted from his post as deputy chairman, Foos from his post as secretary, and Meldeshov from his post as a member of the CEC. All three appointees have served on the CEC for several years. The reshuffling was made possible by President Nazarbayev's January 17 decision to appoint chairman Onalsyn Zhumabekov as deputy head of the Presidential Administration. Zhumabekov, an attorney and the former Minister of Justice, will be responsible for law enforcement and legal reform issues in the presidential administration.

COMMENT

¶4. Comment: The new appointments are not likely to result in any significant changes in the direction of the CEC, as all of the new appointees are long-standing and experienced members of the CEC. End comment.

MILAS